

Echo

Planning officers in favour of dogs home

8:20am Tuesday 29th November 2011

By Paul Offord

PLANS to build a new dogs re-homing centre and staff houses on green belt look set for approval.

Basildon Council's planning officers have recommended councillors support proposals for the 13-acre site, by the junction of the A127 and Nevendon Road.

The former farmland is currently used for car boot sales and contains several industrial units occupied by small businesses. If the centre goes ahead, then the Big One car boot sale would end.

The Dogs Trust, which provides a home for stray dogs rather than having them put down, wants its new centre to contain more than 60 kennels, four specialist puppy pens, a training barn, veterinary suite, and hydrotherapy unit.

Two new houses for staff, who would provide 24-hour care for the dogs, would also be built.

Planning officers accepted the charity's argument that Basildon has a major problem with stray dogs, so the need for a rehoming centre outweighs the case for keeping green belt free from development.

Hannah Baker, from the Dogs Trust, said: "Basildon is an area that urgently needs a dedicated rehoming centre. We hope our plans will be well received."

There were 495 stray dogs collected in the borough, over the 12 months leading up to March this year.

Of these, only 171 were re-claimed and 50 were destroyed or died.

For the previous year, 524 dogs were collected and 52 had to be destroyed.

The charity claims the centre would create about 29 jobs.

Ramsden Crays Parish Council raised concern about noisy dogs affecting residents who live in nearby Gardiners Lane and by the A127.

Basildon Council received 11 responses from residents, to a consultation on the plans.

Seven were in favour and only four were against.

The main reason for objection was the loss of green belt land, while those in favour insisted the facility was much needed to help stray dogs.

Lynda Gordon, leader of the opposition Labour group on Basildon Council, said: "I'm really in favour of this, as the Dogs Trust does a brilliant job and doesn't put stray dogs down."

The application will be considered at a planning meeting in the Basildon Centre, St Martin's Square, starting at 7pm tomorrow.